

A SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. EDWARD P. GOODWIN, D.D.

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

SEVENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING,

HELD AT

PORTLAND, MAINE, OCTOBER 3, 1882.



THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSIONS.

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

BOSTON :

BEACON PRESS: THOMAS TODD, CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE,

NO. 1 SOMERSET STREET.

1883.

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SERMON.

"AS THEY MINISTERED TO THE LORD, AND FASTED, THE HOLY GHOST SAID, 'SEPARATE ME BARNABAS AND SAUL FOR THE WORK WHEREUNTO I HAVE CALLED THEM.'—*Acts xiii: 2.*

THE door swings here upon a new era in the history of the church. The day of the Jew was ended, the day of the Gentile begun. Prior to this, Paul had preached in Cilicia and Peter had been sent to the house of Cornelius, where the Spirit sealed the testimony to the Gentiles with great power. Some of those, also, who "were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen" had gone as far as Antioch, preaching unto the Grecians the Lord Jesus, and "a great number had believed and turned to the Lord." But this was exceptional and anticipatory. In the main, the gospel had been preached to "none but unto the Jews only." (*Acts ix: 30; x: 44; xi: 19-21.*)

The text is the pivotal point of the new departure. Now the work of spreading the gospel among the Gentiles is taken in hand and formally inaugurated. Henceforth, the church appears as a missionary church. The map of her future campaigns is no longer bounded by the narrow rim that embraces Palestine, but pushes its border east, west, north, south, to the utmost horizon—a boundary line that takes in the world.

Note how the work is undertaken and carried on. Not Barnabas, nor Peter, nor John, nor even Paul, advises, projects, shapes the enterprise. It is altogether the purpose, the plan, the work of the Holy Spirit. He originates the scheme; he chooses and calls the workmen; he equips them for their service. This text record stands for this whole mis-

sion history of the book of Acts. From first to last, in choosing apostles or choosing deacons, in holding councils, in laying all plans, in doing all work, the one overshadowing fact is the recognized supremacy and leadership of the Spirit. And in this single fact lies, beyond question, the secret of that amazing success in diffusing the gospel among the nations, that has made this first era of the work of the church the inspiring model for all after years. Other factors—consecrated genius, eloquence, learning, money—had their place and power. But these had to do with the work and its results, much as in the grand campaigns of Napoleon every marshal, and general, and colonel, and captain, and every soldier of the battalions had to do in achieving victory. They were indispensable and potential, each and all; but it was through their unswerving loyalty to the one supreme wisdom that planned the battles, and the one supreme will that fused and ruled all other wills, and inspired all other hearts, that the final triumph came.

So here. There was no iron sovereignty working out its behests, and making no account of the diverse and peculiar gifts and adaptations of those on whom it laid its hand. There was fullest place and play for the fire of Peter, the amiability of Barnabas, the persuasiveness of John, the learning and logic of Paul; ample place and power, too, for gifts, and prayer, and toil. But all these elements and forces were clearly subordinate. Behind them, and working through them, the one pervading, inspiring, potential reason of their efficiency was the leadership and supremacy of the Holy Spirit. This would seem too plain on the face of the records to admit of question. If any doubt, they have only to turn to the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; for therein the apostle Paul, expounding this very matter of spiritual gifts and work, expressly affirms that all these "diversities of gifts," and "operations," "worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." No language could more clearly or emphatically affirm the supreme lordship of the Spirit.

But God's plan is not changed, nor his gospel, nor the

office and work of the Spirit. The command of Christ lays its touch upon us to-day with precisely the same obligation as upon the disciples who heard it from his lips. Now, as truly as at Antioch, the Spirit assumes the sovereign management of all efforts to send forth into all the world the glad tidings of salvation. The methods he uses, the manifestations of himself he makes, are different; but his regnancy is unchanged. He came at Pentecost to *abide* in the world, and not merely to abide as one who should teach, lead, sanctify, empower all Christ's disciples, but to take them under his divine control, and by that domination, lovingly accepted, carry the scheme of redemption to its issue.

Not what we think or prefer, therefore; not what we can reason out as a fitting end for the gospel to propose; not what we can demonstrate as certain to be a success — nothing of all this is to have place here. First, last, always, as to our aim and our methods, as to the toilers who go forth, the fields into which they go, the truths which they shall proclaim, and as to the prayers and gifts of those who send them, the one only question is, what is the mind of the Spirit? Find that, and we find for all time the one supreme, unvarying law of missions. If we fail here, we fail everywhere.

THE END PROPOSED.

What, then, did these first missionaries propose to do? What was the end they sought to realize? This text chapter, the first chapter of distinctively missionary history, will enable us to see. After Paul and Barnabas had found it impossible to persuade the Jews of Pisidian Antioch to accept the truth concerning Jesus Christ, and had said, "Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," there follows this record: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." (Acts xiii: 46-48.)

This word "ordained" is one of the key-words of the gospel. Its counterparts meet us all through the New Testament scriptures. Believers are those "called," "chosen,"

"sealed," "predestinated." Taken together they constitute an "ecclesia," a company of those "called out" from the world. The apostle James, speaking in the council at Jerusalem of Peter's missionary visit to the house of Cornelius, says, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out* of them a people for his name." (Acts xv: 14.) And Peter, writing in after years to Gentile converts, the fruits of missionary labors in "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," gives them greeting as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Then, a little further on, expounding this language, and emphasizing the obligation to holy living which it involved, he says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Pet. ii: 9.) And Paul, setting forth only more specifically the same gospel which he preached on his first missionary journey, and writing like Peter to Gentile Christians, not only calls them "chosen," but "chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world." And he goes further, and declares that the purpose of God in this choosing or predestinating of them as believers, was that they might be "members of the body of Christ," might "comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and so be "filled with all the fulness of God." And all this in order that through them, constituting with their fellow-believers the "holy nation," the "peculiar people," the redeemed church, there might be made known to this world, and to other worlds, the manifold wisdom of God in the scheme of his salvation. (Eph. i, ii, iii.)

This is missionary language; the language of men chosen, taught, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and sent forth to fulfill the command of Christ as to the evangelization of the world. It is hence the language which furnishes the exact conception which the church is to lift up and seek to realize in all its endeavors to honor the same command. There is vast significance in this. As concerns the present order of things, the day of the Jew was indeed passed, the day of the Gentile

come. The middle wall of partition that had stood stern and defiant through the long centuries of the old economy was broken down. Henceforth the gospel was to be preached to all men everywhere, and preached with equal pledge of deliverance, certainty of heirship, forelook of triumph to all who would receive it. There was to be neither Jew nor Greek, neither Scythian nor barbarian, neither bond nor free, but one royal fellowship, one divine and blessed oneness of faith, hope, and love in Christ Jesus.

A GOSPEL OF SEPARATION.

Nevertheless, this missionary gospel, this gospel to be preached among all the nations, was to be emphatically a gospel of separation, a gospel of election, a gospel everywhere calling out and setting apart a peculiar people. The new dispensation was in this respect the precise counterpart of the old. The very terms that appear in and distinctively stamp that old economy of law, reappear in and stamp this new economy of grace. "Covenant," "promise," "children of covenant," "children of promise," "people of God," "peculiar people," "holy nation," "heirs of promise," "inheritance," "kingdom," "kingdom of priests"—what are these words but the very vernacular of the New Testament, the perpetually recurring molds in which the Holy Spirit expresses his thought and purpose concerning what this gospel is, and what it does for all who accept its offers? In other words, the supreme end which in this age the Holy Spirit proposes to accomplish by this witnessing of the gospel to all nations, is to call out thence a people chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; set apart in this present time to be the witnesses of his gospel, the revealers of his grace; and destined in the ages to come to be the transformed and transfigured reflections of himself, and as his body and bride to share his royalty and glory.

Let us make no mistake here. We stand under the pierced hands and the bleeding side. We know this cross over our heads means blood shed, death suffered, for the sin of the world. We compass the nations and the ages in our thought,

and with him that hangs here our hearts reach out far and wide with ardent desire, with inexpressible and tearful longings that all men may know this Christ, may accept this gospel, may possess eternal life.

But God's desires are not God's decrees. This Christ pitying all, eager to save all, is the Christ rejected, hated, crucified by those he seeks to save. The amazing invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is uttered in all ears, but only here and there a Nicodemus, a woman at the well, a thief on the cross, makes response. Across the continents for eighteen centuries have sounded the wonderful words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" but among the swarming millions how insignificant the numbers that care to listen, and how few of these that are eager to possess the gift.

DOES THE GOSPEL PLAN FAIL?

But this is what is to be expected in the nature of the case. This is a gospel published to all, inviting all, urging all, but compelling none. With the proclamation of this gospel to men *we* have to do; with men's acceptance or rejection of it, *God*. We plant, we water; he, and he alone, gives the increase. This is the doctrine of our text, and of all Scripture. Barnabas and Paul are sent by the Spirit to Cyprus. They preach the gospel from one end of the island to the other—preach it in the Spirit, and hence just as faithfully as at Antioch or Iconium. Yet we do not read of any spirit of inquiry here as in those cities. No church appears in the records as planted on the island. No gathering even of those curious to know of the new doctrine is hinted at. The Roman proconsul "desired to hear the Word of God," and "believed." But with this exception the work stands unattested by any results. Was this missionary tour, this proclamation of the gospel in Cyprus, therefore a failure? No. Paul gives us the true explanation of the matter: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh

manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." (II Cor. ii: 14-15.) And this, observe, is not some inference of Paul's, some attempt to palliate, or excuse, or cover up his failures. It is the Spirit's own testimony; and it holds good evermore. If the millions of China, and India, and the Dark Continent accept these glad tidings, are delivered from the appalling curse of heathenism, become the children of the kingdom, blessed, inexpressibly blessed the work, and unutterably glad may they rightfully be who have carried the message, and we who have sent them forth. But if these benighted millions reject this testimony, and turn away from the lifted cross to their cruel and debasing superstitions, none the less acceptably in the sight of God, none the less effectively as regards the coming of the kingdom, will these gospel heralds have done their work.

Judson wrought four hard and painful years before a single Karen so much as asked the way of life. Morrison toiled seven long years in China before he saw his first inquirer. The missionaries of the London Society spent ten years in Madagascar without a known conversion. Fifteen years rolled away at Tahiti before the first native voice was heard in prayer. Yet Judson was as faithful the first year as the last, and pleased his Master as well by the service he rendered. So of all the rest, and of that mighty, unnamed host who through all the centuries have had like experience of giving a witness everywhere despised. Abel, Enoch, and Noah testified to a world that hurled in their faces its mockeries of the God they worshiped; and through all the long years of their witnessing there is no record of revival, or prayer-meeting, or inquirer. Yet there they stand, their names heading God's roll of honor in the eleventh of Hebrews, and the eulogy of their faith and witness inspired by God himself, and by his command hung up for all the ages to read.

So of all such witnesses. It is a fruitage to be exceedingly desired, that three thousand souls should be moved by a single sermon to cry, "What must we do to be saved?" Yet it does

not appear that Peter was ever privileged to repeat that experience. It is a royal honor, and one that must thrill the heart of him who enjoys it as nothing else can this side heaven, to welcome thronging thousands of eager converts, as our brethren in the Sandwich Islands in those years of memorable harvest; and as, in these later years, the Baptist missionaries among the Telugus. So it must be grand to give a lifetime to the service of winning souls, like Miron Winslow, and our revered brother, the still spared and vigorous Titus Coan.¹ But such honors, such service are not permitted to all, nor does it matter. The approval and the rewards of the Master turn not upon the length of the service rendered, nor upon its apparent success, but upon its fidelity: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And when the day of the great reckoning comes, it will be found that whether the toilers wrought few or many years, saw few or many sheaves gathered into the garner, or even died without so much as a visible token of fruit, no labor has been in vain, no life has been a failure.

WHY MEN REJECT THE GOSPEL.

Are any, now, oppressed with the thought that this conception of the missionary work makes it seem a kind of hopeless undertaking? Do they stand facing these unsaved millions, and, with a feeling almost of dismay, ask why, after eighteen centuries of the preaching of the cross, so few comparatively have been reached and saved? I do not wonder. There are mysteries here that no human wisdom can solve. Why men everywhere do not accept the gospel, with its mighty deliverances and glorious hopes, and accept it as eagerly as captives accept liberty, or the hungry bread, and why they prefer instead to hug sin, and endure its beggary, and submit to its iron yoke and scorpion lash, I cannot see. But one thing I do know, one thing I can say. Standing by this cross of the only begotten Son of God, I know that God pities and loves men, and with all the immeasurable fullness of his being longs for their salvation. And I know that wherever

¹ Since deceased.

this gospel goes and this cross is lifted, unto the very ends of the earth, God authorizes the message-bearers to plead and beseech, and by all possible agencies strive to persuade all men everywhere to become the children of his kingdom.

And when you ask me why they do not, I can only answer, with one of these first missionary witnesses: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." (II Cor. iv: 4.) Make all we may of other reasons, of peculiar forms of superstition, of fetichism, and caste, and cannibalism, the one supreme explanation of the rejection of the gospel lies just here: not only in the heart of India, and China, and Africa, and under the shadow of every pagoda, or joss-house, or idol-shrine of whatever name, but in Christian lands, within the walls of Christian churches, within the homes where the Word of God is read and prayer offered, one dire and tremendous fact confronts us — the hate and antagonism of the devil. Men are his slaves. They love darkness rather than light. They walk, believe, think, choose, according to, and under the influence of, the god of this world. The father of lies faces every missionary, every minister of the gospel, and his hand is on the latch of every door the gospel seeks to enter.

THE GOSPEL SCHEME INSPIRING.

But this Scripture conception of the aim of all missionary effort, viz.: the calling out from the nations of a peculiar people, is not a depressing one. We have only to open these missionary epistles to see how wonderfully it inspires faith and inflames zeal. We are much in the way of speaking of our calling as a calling from sin simply, as a deliverance from the penalties of a broken law, as the possession of a hope of final admission into heaven. Not so these apostolic witnesses. They had tasted the powers of the world to come. They had seen miracles attest the divine authority of their Lord, and the divine power of his gospel. They had looked upon that Lord after his resurrection, had noted the signs of his oncoming glorification, had stood by when he had

been upraised before their eyes, and had disappeared in the clouds of heaven. Some of them had seen him in his transfiguration, and had been the privileged eye-witnesses of the majesty awaiting him and them. One, at least, had been caught up into the very presence of the throne, and enjoyed communion with him whose inheritance he was to share. And out of this understanding of their calling, what heavenly ambitions they seek to incite, what glowing ideals alike for admonition and encouragement they set before all believers.

They faced a world lost, hopeless, despairful. They longed with utmost desire for the souls of men, and with prayers and tears by day and night they sought to persuade all who would hear their message to believe unto salvation. But the one thought regnant ever in their hearts, and by which they were most inspired and energized, was not that they were sent to offer a gospel of deliverance from the penalty and curse of sin, but a gospel of adoption into God's family, of citizenship with the saints, of heirship with the Lord Jesus Christ, of ultimate triumph as the crowned and glorified sons of God.

GOD'S WORD EXALTED.

I turn now to consider some of the practical applications of this thought. 1. And first, this: that a supreme allegiance to and exaltation of the Word of God, underlies and vitally conditions this whole missionary enterprise. These earliest missionaries were, as we have seen, chosen, equipped, sent out, led, taught, empowered of the Spirit. And for what? To be as the Lord had pre-announced, his witnesses. Whence came their messages? In part from what some of them had seen and known while associated with their Lord; in part from special supernatural revelations made to them from time to time by the Spirit. As to one of them, the witness was to be to truth which he had received from the lips of the Lord in glory. But in chief part, the testimony was to be as to the teachings of the scriptures of the Old Testament which they had in their hands. How significant, now,

that they who testified never knew any difference as to divineness or authority between these different sources whence their messages came. Whether from the lips of Jesus on earth or in heaven, or communicated directly by the Spirit, or taken from the utterances of Moses, or David, or Isaiah, it was one and the same kind of testimony — the divinely inspired, absolutely infallible Word of God.

There are two notable things about this: first, that these missionary witnesses planted themselves on the irrefragable authority of the Scriptures; and, second, that they taught the doctrines of these Scriptures as the only doctrines that could honor God or help men.

These teachers, let us remember, were chosen of the Spirit, and supernaturally qualified for the specific purpose of making known to men the truths which God desired them to know, and upon the knowledge of which hung their eternal welfare. What a mighty emphasis, then, in the fact that not one of these Spirit-taught witnesses to the truth ever impugned in the slightest degree these Old Testament scriptures which it is the modern fashion to ridicule. Not a word with one of them all about any mistakes of Moses, or David, or Isaiah. Paul even, skilled in the learning of the schools, bred to all the exacting demands for proof, to all the distrust of theories that the study of law supplies, familiar, too, with the subtlest forms of skeptical thought,— Paul nowhere so much as hints at any errors of chronology, any misstatements of history, any false principles of ethics, any unjust conceptions of God, any tyrannous ideas of moral government, any inhuman requirements of any kind. Not a word with him about the allegory of creation, the legend of the deluge, the parable of Lot, the myth of Jonah and the whale, the unchristian spirit of the imprecatory Psalms. On the contrary, this peer of the sages of his time, sweeping in his thought the range of the culture of that day—a culture the very highest antiquity could boast, and, apart from Christianity, the highest any age of the world has ever reached—never found in all the science and philosophy and literature of that profound classic learning

so much as one truth, one principle, one sentiment, whereby to correct or enrich these Scripture testimonies ! Not only so, but, standing in the august presence of a Roman governor and a Jewish king, he went back to the records now most rejected and scoffed at, and, planting himself there, said : “ Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses ” — mark the words — “ than *Moses* did say should come : that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” (Acts xxvi : 22-23.)

And there stood they all. Not a man or woman or child in this missionary epoch ever dreamed of doubting the full, divine inspiration, the infallible authority of the Word of God. They would as soon have thought of questioning the stability of the eternal throne. And this was not the mere blind assent of those on whose necks was an iron yoke. It was the profound conviction of those conscious of a blessed freedom, and moved with earnest desire to win others to the same divine fellowship. They knew that if they were to command men, they must speak with the authority of God. And they did. And that is the only ground upon which any witness for God’s truth can in any age appeal to men.

THE DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURE TAUGHT.

But these apostolic missionaries made it their prime business to unfold and expound these Scriptures. And, according to their witness, the salvation of all men turned upon their acceptance or rejection of the doctrines herein revealed. What those doctrines were, how clearly these records everywhere show. A race lost and without hope apart from the grace of God ; the human heart natively, and persistently, and mightily, alien from God, and at enmity with him and his law ; a divine Christ lifted on the cross as a true and literal expiation for sin ; a heart regenerated by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, and this conditioned upon faith

in Jesus Christ; the real, bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his glorification at the right hand of the Father, as the guaranty of the like resurrection and glorification of his saints; the return of the Lord, and the establishment of his kingdom over all the earth; a day of final judgment; and beyond this life a future to all who die unsaved unlighted by a gleam of hope — these are the unmistakable witness of these earliest and Spirit-taught missionaries. And these are the testimonies repeated and reemphasized by the Spirit, by and through which this first missionary era of the church achieved its grand results, and in the life-time of the witnesses sounded forth the gospel among all the nations of the known world. (Col. i: 6.)

If we are to share their success, we must share their faith and their testimony. But how much faith and testimony in pulpit and pew that comes short of this. How many that impugn the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures; that declare their chronology false, their statements of fact in part untrue to history, in part irreconcilable with science; that affirm their conceptions of God unworthy, their teachings often imperfect, sometimes contradictory; that insist even that the Bible is only one of various divine revelations — the written word, the book of nature, the testimony of reason — and that these three are of coördinate authority.

Then, along with such views, and largely as their legitimate outgrowth, how many have dissolved all the blackness out of sin; put pity and pardon in the place of justice and penalty; substituted development for regeneration; reduced Calvary to a vivid object-lesson of God's love, and the judgment to a figure of speech; metamorphosed the ages to come into a period for rectifying the failures of God's moral government in this present time; and finish up their teachings by calling the pit of perdition a myth, or spanning it with a bow of promise.

LAX DOCTRINE HOSTILE TO THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

What need to argue how utterly antagonistic all such teachings are to the Scripture theory of missions? That theory

is rooted in the infallible Word. It knows only a race of lost sinners. It exalts God and magnifies his law. It sees deliverance only in the shedding of the blood of the one true sacrifice for sin. It plants the necessity of supernatural regeneration at the threshold of the kingdom. Its only symbol of help is the cross. Its only word of hope is, *now*. Its only outlook for those who die unbelieving is a night of dread, unbroken doom. Say what fine things these teachers of the new theology may about the innate goodness of man, his longings for light, the sweetness of pity, the divineness of pardon, and the like, no such beliefs will ever send men to face the malarial death-belt of Africa, or the fierce cannibals of the South Pacific. No. Only such tremendous truths as cluster around Sinai and Calvary — ruin, redemption, life, death, heaven, hell — can inspire the soul to such undertakings. To confront a lost world with judgment and doom impending, and try and stir the people of God to duty with a theology of this limp and modern sort, were like seeking to inspire an army for battle by giving it chloroform. Worse even. Such doctrines fortify heathenism. The peril of Japan to-day is the tendencies of her thinking men toward infidelity. Dr. Davis, of Kioto, says that he has had to meet in his class-room the infidel objections to the gospel furnished to Japanese students by the sermons preached in American and so-called evangelical pulpits, and the editorials and other articles printed in so-called evangelical newspapers! And he declares that in one instance he took a class ready to graduate, and spent a full month in steady endeavors to uproot these tares sown across the sea by American Christians!

It is bad enough for Christian England to poison China with opium, and furnish from Birmingham idols for the Hindus to worship in Bombay. But this is worse. Opium deadens chiefly the sensibilities, and idols carry no daggers; but this lax theology stupefies the church at home, and stabs Christianity abroad.

CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

2. But again, our thought furnishes an enlarged conception of Christian giving. I noticed a slight demonstration of applause when the financial report of the year was read, and a small credit balance appeared. But how many know how that balance came? Read this opening paragraph in the *October Herald*, and see: "*Only by curtailment of needed expenditure, and by deferring some payments to another year which he would have gladly included in those of the present year, will the treasurer be able to report, as he hopes to do, a small balance on the credit side of the treasury*" That is to say, by cutting off expenditures urgently demanded by the work, and by carrying over to the next year the debts that ought to have been paid in this, we have a credit balance! Little cause that for congratulation! But the showing is even worse; for, after all our brave resolvings and re-resolvings at past anniversaries to advance our giving at least twenty-five per cent, the figures show, instead of gain, an actual falling off in our contributions, and of nearly a thousand dollars the current year. Indeed, only the gifts of the dead have for years kept this Board from becoming bankrupt.

I would not utter one discouraging, much less one censorious, word here. I will not affirm with President Washburn of Robert College, that such facts indicate a diminished interest in the cause of missions. I will not echo Professor Christlieb's question, "Where is the deep enthusiasm displayed at the time when most of our missionary societies were founded?" I will not take sides with Rev. Griffith John, himself a devoted missionary of the London Society, who cites facts and figures to show the flagging zeal of English Christians. I accept all that can be said about the liberal pouring forth of treasure to establish and endow colleges and theological seminaries at home and abroad, to plant schools among the freedmen and in the New West, to build houses of worship, to pay church debts, to carry on city missions, to help forward manifold other Christian and philanthropic enterprises. Nevertheless, when I remember that a thousand millions of heathen have

never yet heard the sound of the gospel, and with every heart-beat are passing into eternity unsaved, and when I think of the vast resources at the command of the professed followers of Christ, I cannot but arraign the church as sadly unfaithful to the trust committed to her charge, of evangelizing the nations.

OUR RESOURCES.

Think of the facts. One fifth of the population of this land is claimed to be made up of evangelical Christians. Not only so, but the gain of such evangelical Christian element in our population during the past thirty years has been sixty per cent greater than the gain of the population itself, with its immense influx of foreign and largely irreligious immigrants. What follows? Secretary Clark stated last year, as his deduction, that the "very atmosphere is charged with moral and religious ideas;" that "a sense of great obligation to God and to mankind pervades the nation;" that hence the "lever to raise the world out of the degradation of heathenism has been placed in our hands." This of our spiritual resources. What now of the financial? Let us see. Our mines furnish every year \$100,000,000 of gold and silver; then, according to Dr. Dorchester, supposing the Christian to hold his own with others in industry, sagacity, success, one fifth of this belongs to the church. Our agricultural products yield not less than \$2,000,000,000 and one fifth belongs to the church. Our banks are said to have an aggregate of deposits of not far from \$3,000,000,000, and one fifth belongs to the church. Our coal, and iron, and copper, and salt, and coal-oil, and manufactures do not yield less than \$500,000,000, and one fifth belongs to the church. Our railroads yield in net earnings \$250,000,000, and one fifth belongs to the church. And the wealth of the country, it is to be remembered, more than keeps pace with the advance in population. As a matter of fact, it has quadrupled since 1850, and multiplied sixteen fold within the memory of persons now living. Mr. Mulhall, an English statistician, says, "Every day the sun rises upon the American people it sees an addition to the accumulated

wealth of the republic of \$2,500,000, which is equal to one third the daily accumulation of mankind." And Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, is authority for the statement that "every twenty years there is added to the valuation of this country wealth enough to buy the whole German Empire, with its buildings, and its ships, and its invested property." And one fifth of all this prodigious increase supposedly belongs to the church.

OUR GIFTS.

But what are the facts now as to our Christian giving? How far does this "atmosphere charged with moral and religious ideas," this "sense of great obligation to God and mankind," arouse Christian people, and constrain them to pour forth their money for the spread of the gospel? The first fact in the way of answer has already been noted, viz.: that in spite of all the eloquent utterances at St. Louis a year ago, and all the enthusiasm with which the resolution was adopted to advance our contributions, this year's giving is a thousand dollars less than that of the year preceding. More. For twenty years our Congregational churches have made no gain in the per cent of their giving. Taking the last five years and comparing them with the five years preceding, there has been a yearly falling off of more than \$20,000, or of five and two thirds per cent. In 1850 the average of giving was \$1.21 per church-member; in 1881, a fraction more than 91 cents. A strange kind of spiritual electricity this with which the atmosphere of the land is "charged!" A very peculiar "sense of great obligation to God and mankind" that pervades the church! If the lever to raise the heathen be indeed in our hands, we are not remarkably zealous in using it.

Meantime we spend, so the papers say, \$125,000,000 every year for dress goods, and Christian people spend their share; \$25,000,000 for kid gloves, and church-members spend their share; \$5,000,000 for ostrich feathers, and the disciples of Christ spend their share; \$80,000,000, at least, for tobacco, and Christian men, and some ministers, spend their share; \$180,000,000 are estimated to have been spent abroad in

travel and purchases by 60,000 Americans, the past year, and Christian travelers spent their share. Then how many houses of Christian people built every year, that cost from \$20,000 to \$100,000 each? How many Christian business men put \$50,000, \$75,000, \$100,000 into a single enterprise—a manufactory, a mine, a lumber venture, a speculation in stocks—and repeat it every few years as an ordinary business transaction? How many who, by their own witness, realize from \$10,000 to \$50,000 yearly in net income?

Put, now, these figures as to our resources and these as to our expenditures side by side with the figures which show what we give for the spread of the gospel, and what can we say more truly of this latter sum than to call it a pitiful dole?

But where lies the trouble? Primarily in the lack of a profound sense that all we have and are is the purchase of the blood of Calvary, and as such is to be held and used entirely subject to God's disposal. We need preëminently a baptism of consecration.

LACK OF SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

Then, further, those who are disposed to give have little or no system in their benevolence. Note the facts:

The last *Year-Book* gives as the total of our church-members 381,697. Let us discard the odd thousands as unable to give. Suppose the remaining 300,000 were to give five cents per week towards missions; that would be \$2.60 per member, or a total of \$780,000; considerably more than double the amount contributed, apart from legacies, the current year. Again: Suppose these 300,000 givers were to be divided thus: 150,000 to give five cents per week; 75,000, ten cents per week; 50,000, twenty cents per week; 25,000, fifty cents per week; then the account would stand thus:

150,000	church-members	at	.05	per week	=	\$390,000
75,000	"	"	.10	"	"	390,000
50,000	"	"	.20	"	"	520,000
25,000	"	"	.50	"	"	650,000

This gives a total of \$1,950,000—a sum which, setting aside

the bequests, is more than five times what was contributed the past year. Do any think the apportionment excessive and burdensome? The surrender of one cigar a day would more than pay the share of some. The saving of street-car fare by walking one way, either to or from business, would pay it with more. The sacrifice of one picture, one book, one plume, one bit of jewelry, one Christmas gift, one button on kid gloves even, would pay it with how many. Writes one of our well-known missionaries, "Last year the amount given by the churches of this field, comprising 1,408 church-members, was \$7,060. To appreciate this, you should see their poverty. Giving here means self-denial—the giving up, not of luxuries, for those are little known, but of the comforts and necessities of life. Were the self-denial represented in that \$7,000 practiced by the home churches, the treasuries of benevolent societies would be so full that their managers would not know what to do with the money." If these 300,000 giving members of our churches should each contribute fifty cents per week, this missionary prophecy would come true. For then there would pour into the treasury the enormous sum of \$7,800,000; and this simply as the result of a system of paying our dues to the Lord as regularly as we pay them to men.

DEVOTION OF INCOMES.

But, dear friends, why should we not go far beyond this? There are many Christian men whom the Lord has so prospered that they have reached the point of competency, and not a few have passed it, and are rapidly accumulating wealth. Their families are amply provided for; they can educate their children, meet all needful expenses, and lay by a cash surplus of from \$5,000 to \$50,000 in fair business times. Why, now, should not a large number of such men, with from five to twenty years of active life before them, say: "Lord, I cannot go abroad to preach to the heathen, but I can earn the money to send those who will do the work better than I could, and henceforth I purpose to give myself to mak-

ing money to this end. Give me thy blessing, that I may reap thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold."

Suppose there were ten cities in New England outside of Boston, like Portland, for example, that could furnish each ten such men—men who could put \$5,000 apiece into this treasury. Suppose Boston could furnish fifty who could put in \$10,000 each, New York City as many more, Chicago and the West—we are *very poor* out there, you know, with only three or four hundred millions of dollars' worth of corn a year, as much more of wheat, and so on—Chicago and the West fifty more at \$5,000, and all the rest of the churches of the land an equal amount in varying sums, then we should have this showing:

Ten cities with ten men contributing each \$5,000	\$500,000
Boston, with fifty contributing each \$10,000	500,000
New York City, with fifty contributing each \$10,000	500,000
Chicago and the West, with fifty contributing each \$5,000	250,000
The remaining churches contributing an equal amount	<u>1,750,000</u>
Income of the Board from these sources	\$3,500,000
Add the contributions of the churches on the basis of weekly gifts, previously suggested	<u>1,950,000</u>
Total of missionary receipts	\$5,450,000

You smile at such figures. But I insist, with all soberness, that there is nothing preposterous about them. I believe that when Christian men are as zealous and as wise in their generation as the children of this world are in theirs, and bring to bear the same sagacity, and enthusiasm, and devotion of means in managing the Lord's business, they will keep such sums pouring into the Lord's treasury.

One thing more. Men of the world form syndicates for the sale of stocks, lands, and the prosecution of various enterprises. Why, now, should there not be mission syndicates? Why should not a score or more of Christian capitalists get together and divide up a province of China among them, each one assuming his share of the territory to be occupied, and saying, I will be responsible for giving or raising all the money required to evangelize the people of my district? and then another group of missionary financiers say, We will

take Japan, and another circle the Bihé field in Africa, and another the work proposed in Umzila's kingdom, and so on? Why is it not just as practicable to develop missions thus as it is mines or railroads?

MOTIVES OF INSPIRATION.

3. This line of thought brings into the foreground the true motives which are to inspire our efforts, and emphasizes the true secret of success. Some of our missionaries think we are in peril here. They speak, in their letters to me, of those who are moved largely by the "romance of missions;" who are more affected by the "privations and sufferings of the missionaries than by the needs of the lost and the commands of the Lord." More potent still, they think, is the feeling prevalent among the churches, that inclines to test all mission work by its apparent results, and that has much or little interest in it accordingly. Given so much money and so many men, and such and such progress ought to follow: China, India, Africa, the world even, evangelized in so many years. If the work does not show such appreciable fruitage, such positive and increasing dividends upon the outlay, it is a failure. So runs the theory.

But such, clearly, are not the motives which are to determine our missionary zeal. Our duty to send the gospel to the heathen no more depends on the trials and sufferings of the missionaries, than on the climate in which they labor or the food they eat. Just as little is it to be measured by percentages and the multiplication table. Not that we are to make no account of facts that go to the stirring up of enthusiasm. Far from it. By all means let us magnify whatever tokens of cheer are to be found. Let us incite our zeal by the proofs that these age-long and relentless despotisms of Oriental faith are at last giving way. Let us exult over the Sandwich Islands redeemed, and Madagascar redeemed, and the Telugus flocking by thousands to the cross. Let us take highest inspiration from these open doors that now on every hand invite the heralds of salvation. Let us accept all these proofs of what Christianity has done and can do. Nay, let us accept

even the statistics — hard as they are for some of us to believe — which testify of the expansion and potency of evangelical religion ; albeit I should as soon think of counting the headstones in a cemetery to find out the growth and resources of a city, as of counting the names on church registers to measure the progress and power of the gospel. Nay, let us accept the dry bones of the prophet's vision that *are to become* men under the breath of the Spirit, and reckon them among the forces that are to push on this missionary work.

But let us never forget that all such facts are simply encouragements ; in no sense the grand, impelling motives for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. With that question, so far as concerns our obligation, neither the sufferings of missionaries nor the presumptions or probabilities of success have anything to do. We stand precisely where these disciples in the text stood when the Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Not a word as to any conditions. Not a word of promise as to idolatry loosening its hold, temples becoming churches, Cyprus redeemed, Asia Minor redeemed ; not so much as the barest hint at any success that was to follow. They were to go forth simply because the Holy Spirit assigned the work. Theirs the responsibility of testifying — his, of making the testimony bear fruit.

Exactly so with us. No matter whether success in the work comes early, or late, or does not come at all. No matter whether thousands hang upon the witness of the Word, and revival follows revival till the Dark Continent is luminous with the light of heaven, and China and India are vocal with the songs of the redeemed ; or there be roused instead the spirit of heathen hate, and the messengers of peace by scores and hundreds seal their testimony with their blood. Nay, no matter if all the missionary toils and tears and martyr-deaths, from the day of our Lord's utterance of his last command till now, had not won a single soul ; all this would not take a feather's weight from the obligation laid upon our hearts. Neither success nor failure determines duty. We are soldiers. From our great Captain's lips one summons rings ever in our

ears — “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” It is not for us to debate, but to obey.

OBLIGATION CENTERED IN LOVE.

I do not forget that mere enforced obedience is not what our Lord asks; that if we give our bodies to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth nothing. But I assume that we are not hirelings rallying under the banner for the pay we get, and much less an army of slaves or conscripts, doing battle against our will. No; we are fellow-servants with him who, while constrained by the surpassing love of Christ, felt that necessity was laid upon him. Our personal devotion to him whose name we wear, is the one glad and potent inspiration to all service. But because we are his true followers, and are ruled by his love, we accept his yoke as the true symbol of our calling, and know no sweeter privilege than obeying his commandments, doing his will. Service is what proves and exalts love.

Ah, if in this age of sentiment, of little sense of God, of loosened grip of conscience and of obligation, the Lord's professed people could only be got face to face with him, as Moses when the bush flamed with the ineffable presence of Jehovah! or as Isaiah, when the splendors of the eternal throne with its attendant seraphim flashed before him! And if, while they were conscious of the overshadowing of God, and of the allegiance they owe to him, there could be stamped on their souls in letters of fire that old and almost forgotten word, *obedience*, a revival of missionary zeal would be sure to follow.

I am sure, my brethren, that our greatest need lies here. Genius is well, and eloquence, and learning, and sagacity, and money; but they are not the foremost needs of this great work. When God would send Moses on his mighty errand, and failed to convince him that he would have success, you remember he said to him at last, “What is that in thine hand?” Moses answered, “A rod.” “Cast it on the ground,” said the Lord. He did so, and it became a serpent, the instrument of a miracle. It was the commonest bit of a thorn-bush — rude, battered, unsightly — just such as the Arabs of

the desert use with their flocks to-day. Yet God yoked his omnipotence thereto! And thenceforth, wherever that rod went, God went; wherever it was lifted with reverent and prayerful heart, the majesty of heaven seemed obedient to its behest. Plague after plague came and went, the sea was cleft, the Amalekites were defeated, waters burst forth from the rock — there was nothing that could withstand its power. And when the day of its service was over, it seems to have been laid up by the ark — a rod covered with buds and blossoms — to be a memorial evermore of how God chooses the weak things, and base things, and things that are despised, to confound the things which are mighty, and bring to naught the things which are.

In this profound conviction of our utter nothingness, and in the kindred conviction of the infinite resources of the Holy Spirit as always available, always waiting to be appropriated by the Lord's disciples, must always lie our real inspiration and the secret of our success. Think a moment why.

THE CONFLICT — THE FOE.

Christian living is a battle, not a hymn. Here are two mighty kingdoms — the kingdoms of light and of darkness, of good and evil, of Christ and Satan — pitted against each other, and having as their issue the triumph of truth or error, of holiness or sin. What tremendous and dire conflict does this involve. And how manifest that, in the final struggle that impends, the forces of good and evil will be marshaled with the utmost sagacity, and hurled against each other with an energy and a determination never paralleled before.

This kingdom of evil is no figure of speech. It is an organization real, complete, potential, and that, ever since that far, mystic time when the angels forfeited their high estate and were thrust out of heaven, has steadily sought to thwart God. At its head is the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, a being by native endowment only inferior to the Son of God. He organizes its forces, projects its campaigns, leads on its undertakings.

Co-working with him, sharing his spirit, eager to execute his behests, pliant to his slightest wish, is a vast host of principalities and powers, possessing amazing gifts of intelligence, activity and strength,—once, it is quite possible, the equals of Gabriel, Michael, and the noblest angels that surround God's throne. Through all the ages of human history, this realm of fallen magnates has had but one aim, and has concentrated on that all its infernal sagacity, and hate, and energy. That aim has been the ruin of our race. From the fall of our first parents down to this hour, whatever of deceit, and wrong, and violence, and pain, and woe, have been in the world, have been due directly, according to God's Word, to the machinations and efforts of this arch-enemy of God. But when the Babe of Bethlehem was born, the gates of the pit swung wide, and perdition, as it were, emptied itself, that its dark legions might destroy the hopes of men, and prevent the enthronement of Christ as universal King. We stand on the eve of the final battle. Mighty as the antagonisms of the past have been, this is the hour of supremest conflict. Hence the resources of the potentate of evil, all his infernal craft, and malignity, and far-reaching influence, will be taxed to the last degree. For, if he fails now, he fails forever.

OUR HELP.

The issue is not doubtful. Yonder empty tomb, yonder ascending Lord, hardly less than the word that cannot be broken, give certain pledge of the triumph of the Christ-kingdom. But tremendous warfare foreruns and conditions that triumph; and in waging this, we need the highest encouragements and helps. Such we have preëminently in the leadership and sovereignty of the Spirit. He was in the counsels of eternity, and with the Father and the Son projected the scheme of redemption. He met the great adversary at the threshold of human history, and made the first death caused by sin become the first victory of redeeming grace. He inspired the sweet hope of the coming Messiah with which the hearts of patriarchs and prophets were made

glad. He set the types of the slain, and risen, and glorified Christ all through the ritual and records of the old economy. He prompted all the prayers of faith, all the confessions of sin, all the seekings after God, from Eden to Bethlehem. He supplied the wisdom for building tabernacle and temple, and for securing the successful rulership of the kingdom. He touched the lips of David and Isaiah, and gave to the church through them a legacy of comforts, and helps, and hopes, which all the centuries cannot exhaust. More than this. He shared the humiliation of him who was born in the stable, and shared it as the supreme agency by which God and man became one for the salvation of the lost. He had to do with every utterance of that Saviour when he spake as man never spake, with every invitation, promise, benediction, denunciation; and with every deed of beneficence, every sign and wonder as well. He was an outcast equally with the despised Nazarene. He felt all the insults, all the opprobrium, all the scorn of which Jesus was the continual object. He felt the pangs of the garden, the shame and anguish of the cross. For he pitied, he loved men even as Christ, and he was with the all-enduring one to the end. Nay, more: he quickened the lifeless body in the tomb of Joseph, clothed it with the glory of the resurrection, and the higher glory of the ascension, and now is in the world, filling the place of our absent Lord, and with all his infinite knowledge, and wisdom, and power, is carrying the gospel scheme to its appointed issue. What a wonderful source of confidence, what a prodigious guaranty of success we have then in this doctrine of the Spirit. Here is he who from the beginning has known and had to do with everything pertaining to this work of saving men, who fathoms all the plans, and machinations, and secret thoughts of the arch-adversary, who possesses in himself all the measureless resources of the Godhead, and whose most intense desire and purpose are centered in the final exaltation of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

OUR SYMPATHIZERS.

And let us remember that we are not alone in this great conflict with the powers of darkness. Above us, crowding the very vault of heaven, is a mighty cloud of witnesses. Patriarchs, prophets, kings — the innumerable company saved by a gospel that they knew only in type and shadow, yet rejoiced in — are there. And there are apostles, evangelists, teachers, whose delight was in witnessing this gospel, and who counted it a divine privilege to share their Master's reproaches, and lay down their lives in his behalf. There, too, is the gathered host of those missionary toilers who, in later years, faced dungeons and stakes, and savage hate and cruelties, that they might make known the tidings of salvation, and whose bones whiten to-day on the soil of every continent beneath the sky. And there, mingled with all these, is the countless throng of angels whose supreme joy it is to know of the victories of the cross. What a glorious fellowship is this, bending eagerly over the battlements of heaven, full of ardent sympathy with our aims, sending down, as it were, their words of cheer, and with palms in their hands inciting us to deeper zeal, and waving us on to victory! Yes, and above them all, more interested than they all, there flashes the vision of One with feet as burnished brass, with eyes as flaming fire, whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength, and whose voice is as the sound of many waters. The prints of the nails are still in his outstretched hands; the scars of the thorn-crown are still discernible on his brow. And as I look, his lips part, and there comes to my ears the message: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Oh, my brethren, gathered in such a presence, waiting with one accord in one place, waiting with urgent and tearful pleadings of the promise yoked to this divine command, why should there not come upon us the baptism of the Pentecostal fire? Nay, why should there not be born of this meeting a missionary spirit, a divine passion for souls,

that should lead on an era of Pentecosts to be repeated, and re-repeated with ever widening range and waxing power, until that one blessed day, for which through weary centuries this tossed and groaning earth has waited, and God has waited, and the crucified and risen Redeemer has waited, shall be ushered in — the kingdom of Christ come, and the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!



